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Sen. Birch Bayh

CIA faces too much red tape

In the wake of the embassy takeover in Iran and the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, much of the ensuing debate has centered on American military preparedness. This is, of course, a key question that all Americans must consider during these times of crises, and one that Congress is going to have to wrestle with as the next fiscal year's appropriations bills begin moving through the system.

Equally important to our nation's security, however, is the United States' ability to know what the other side is doing and planning. The only way we can accomplish this is through a strong intelligence establishment. As chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, this is paramount in my mind.

There is no question that the Central Intelligence Agency and other information-gathering organizations are capable of amazing feats. Their ability to learn what the Russians are up to through the use of personnel as well as hardware is nothing short of magical. But, I think it would be a terrible shame if these capabilities were

placed under a handicap which rendered them useless.

At the present time, when planning covert operations, the CIA must report to nothing less than eight Congressional committees. This requirement — coming under the so-called "Hughes-Ryan Act" — should be repealed. Instead, intelligence agencies should report to the two committees in the House and Senate which have particular expertise in these matters: the House and Senate intelligence committees. By stipulating these requirements, the legitimate Constitutional rights of Americans — both at home and overseas — and basic human rights of others will be protected without the potential risk of highly damaging leaks.

With regard to the disclosure of secrets by former intelligence agents, I firmly believe that such an individual — if they insist on following this course — should go to jail. We simply cannot have the names of agents or other important intelligence information being compromised. Every operative employed by the CIA must sign a contract and that contract must be

honored where national security is involved.

Finally, the Intelligence Committee, working with the President and other members of the Administration, has introduced a bill establishing a charter for the CIA. This is an important step in delineating exactly what the Agency can and cannot do, while at the same time protecting its ability to gather intelligence about what is happening in the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

An effective intelligence network is not the only ingredient needed in making American foreign policy. Obviously, policy-makers must understand how to use the information they have and be able to predict the consequences of our country's actions. However, no President or Secretary of State can make sound judgements if the information they are receiving is inaccurate or incomplete. While this was not the case with the Afghanistan situation, it could well be what is in store for us in the future unless we act to beef up our intelligence community.